

North Chicago, IL - Congressman Mark Kirk (R-Highland Park) announced Wednesday he brokered a deal with the Navy to increase the number of military homes to be built in North Chicago from 966 to 1,100. Under the Public-Private Venture (PPV) proposed by the Navy, cost analysis indicated that these additional homes were needed for North Chicago Schools to ensure the flow of federal education Impact Aid.

“The Navy’s decision to increase the number of homes on the base is good news to North Chicago schools and to military families whose children attend these schools,” said Kirk. “With this agreement, we can ensure the flow of Impact Aid continues in North Chicago. We will also build more new homes in North Chicago, boosting our economy.”

The Navy’s plan to increase housing comes after Kirk worked with North Chicago city and school officials to allow Navy children to attend their own neighborhood schools, starting with the 2006-2007 school year. Currently, Navy children are divided among North Chicago’s six elementary schools rather than attending their local neighborhood schools. This non-neighborhood policy provided strong incentives for Navy families to seek housing away from North Chicago in military homes located in Highwood, Glenview or in the civilian economy. Kirk sent a letter to North Chicago 187 School District President Board President, Cynthia Dockery, indicating that if the school district can return to its pre-2003 policy of neighborhood schools, he could influence the Navy to build additional homes in North Chicago. The School Board unanimously voted last week to allow Navy children to attend their neighborhood schools starting in 2006. Kirk notified the Navy of the policy change and the Navy agreed to increase their housing number to 1,100.

“Allowing Navy children to attend their neighborhood school provides great incentive for the Navy to encourage families to choose North Chicago homes. This policy makes sense, encourages Navy families to choose North Chicago and will go a long way to maintaining the key ‘heavily impacted’ status for District 187” said Kirk. “I will continue to work closely with President Dockery and Mayor Rockingham on the Navy’s PPV plans, but it appears our work is paying off resulting in more funding for our schools and better homes for our military families.”

The PPV also allows for military homes to be taxed for the first time, giving North Chicago more tax revenue for their schools, police & fire departments.

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